

£800 NOTEBOOKS

INTRODUCTION

It's now possible to buy a notebook computer for only a few hundred pounds. These budget notebooks are perfectly suitable for office work or browsing the web, but if you want to do anything more complicated, such as edit and organise your photos or transfer your home movies to DVDs, a more powerful computer will save you time.

Thankfully, you don't need to spend much more to buy a more powerful notebook. A budget of £800 will get you a portable dual-core computer with a long battery life, a spacious hard disk and a widescreen display. Some of these notebooks can even play the latest games.

This month we've gathered together six of the latest notebooks that cost around £800 including VAT. Whatever you want from your computer, we'll help you find a powerful but portable PC.

Alan Lu

PC systems and storage expert

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PORTABLE PERFECTION

You don't have to break the bank to buy a powerful, well-specified portable computer, as our round-up of six £800 notebooks proves

Choosing an... £800 Notebook

You shouldn't have to make any significant compromises when buying a notebook computer at this price, but all computers have different strengths and weaknesses. With this in mind, it's worth considering the way you'll be using your new notebook, and the features that are most important to you.

WINDOWS SHOPPING

Most of the notebooks here come with the Windows Vista Home Premium operating system. This includes Media Center, which makes it easy to browse your music, photos and videos. If you add a TV tuner, it can also schedule recordings. Home Premium also includes a video-editing application and some games.

The Sony and Toshiba notebooks use Windows Vista Business. This doesn't include Media Center, but does include a faxing and scanning program, a disk cloning utility and support for the Remote Desktop Connection system. This allows you to control one computer remotely on a network using another.

If you want to use any of these features it's simplest to choose a notebook with the correct version of Vista preinstalled, but you can upgrade to other versions later using the Windows Anytime Upgrade system – see our FAQ on page 11 (*What's New: PC Systems*) for details.

DUE PROCESS

Most of the notebooks in this round-up come with an Intel Core 2 Duo processor. The exception is Evesham's Quest A430, which uses AMD's Turion 64 X2 TL-56. Although fast enough for day-to-day work, it can't keep up with the Core 2 Duo chips for more demanding tasks such as video encoding. If you'll be using your notebook for such challenging work, pay particular attention to the results of our performance benchmarks on page 74. Toshiba's Satellite Pro, which uses a fast Core 2 Duo T7400 processor, produced the best result.

All of the notebooks come with at least 1GB of RAM, and three come with a generous 2GB. This can be useful during intensive tasks or when running several programs at once, as shown by our multiple application benchmark. In this test Eclipse's Matrix Pro, which has 2GB of memory, outperformed the Toshiba notebook with its faster processor and 1GB of memory.

LONG LIFE

If you want to use your notebook on the move, a good battery is essential. For general use, we recommend at least two hours of battery life. In this group the Acer and Sony notebooks impressed us, each running for well over three hours, with Toshiba's Satellite Pro not far



behind. The Evesham and Eclipse notebooks fell short of two hours, and Rock's Pegasus ran for just one hour and 38 minutes.

PIXEL PERFECT

We examine the quality of each notebook's display using a series of demanding tests. Our reviews will tell you which are good, and which suffer from image problems.

Apart from Evesham's Quest, which has a 17in widescreen display, all the notebooks here use a 15.4in widescreen display. Evesham's Quest and Rock's Pegasus have a native resolution of 1,680x1,050, which is enough to show two documents side by side. The others have a lower resolution of 1,280x800 pixels, which is still spacious enough for most uses. The Quest's 17in display might be preferable if you have poor eyesight, but it does make it a rather bulky notebook. The high-resolution 15.4in display used by Rock sounds like the best of both worlds, with a high-resolution display that takes up less space, but it can make text hard to read unless you have good eyesight.

If you regularly work in offices with overhead lighting, look for a notebook with an anti-glare coating instead of a glossy finish, such as Toshiba's Satellite Pro. Gloss-coated screens look better in darker environments, but they can create distracting reflections when used under office lighting.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

A poor keyboard can be just as annoying as a substandard display. Notebook keyboards should have widely spaced keys that provide a positive click when pressed. Similarly, touch pads should be large and accurate with firm but responsive buttons. Some in this group are fine but others are frustrating to use, and our reviews will tell you which.

GAMING GEAR

If you want to play the latest 3D games on your notebook, look for a model with a dedicated graphics chip. Integrated graphics processors, such as the Intel Graphics Media Accelerator 950 used by Sony and Toshiba, aren't powerful enough to play the newest titles but should be able to cope with older games.

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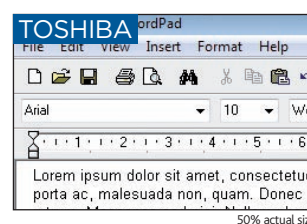
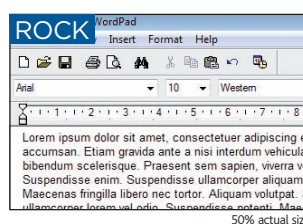


The ATI Mobility Radeon X1600 used by Eclipse and the 256MB Nvidia GeForce Go 7600 chips in Evesham's and Rock's notebooks managed playable frame rates of around 20fps in our Call of Duty 2 test. This means modern games are playable, but you'll need to settle for less detailed graphics to get a playable frame rate. Acer's Aspire uses a less powerful 128MB GeForce Go 7600 chip, so you'll need to reduce graphical settings even further to make games playable.

STORE MORE

If you'll only be storing office documents on your notebook, an 80GB hard disk will be sufficient. We'd expect a larger hard disk at this price, though, and if you like to hoard video files or TV programmes, look for a notebook with at least 120GB of hard disk space.

Pixel perfect Display resolutions compared



◀ Rock's Pegasus and Toshiba's Satellite Pro have 15.4in displays, but the Pegasus has a higher resolution. This allows you to fit more on the screen, but it can also be harder to read unless you have perfect eyesight



ACER Aspire 5683WLMi

★★★★★

£791 inc VAT



Acer's Aspire 5683WLMi isn't the fastest notebook in the group, but it has plenty of other desirable features to compensate.

FEATURES

Typists will appreciate the Aspire's large, well-spaced keyboard. The accurate touch pad and its responsive buttons are also a pleasure to use. It is one of only two notebooks in this group to have a 160GB hard disk.

Demanding photo editors will notice the uneven backlight along the bottom of the widescreen display, and we noticed some slight coarseness in both our colour and greyscale transitions tests. It's still one of the better displays in this group, though.

If you need to connect an external display, you can use one with either a D-sub or DVI connector. It has both ExpressCard/34 and CardBus slots, so it's easy to add peripherals such as a Draft-N wireless networking adaptor.

PERFORMANCE

Although it has a generous 2GB of RAM, the Aspire's Core 2 Duo T5500 processor isn't as fast as other notebooks in this group. It outperformed only Sony's Vaio, which has a slower processor and less memory, and Evesham's Quest. It's still fast enough for all but the most demanding uses, though.

The Aspire isn't suited to 3D gaming. Its GeForce Go 7600 graphics chip has 128MB of memory, rather than the 256MB in Rock's Pegasus and Evesham's Quest. It produced a mere 10.8fps in our Call of Duty 2 test. However, its battery lasted for three hours and 26 minutes – the longest in the group, and enough for most short-haul flights.

VERDICT

Unless you need the fastest possible performance, the Aspire 5683WLMi is hard to beat. It's a great notebook with plenty of memory, a comfortable keyboard and touch pad and a spacious hard disk.

SUMMARY

- ✓ Long battery life
- ✓ Comfortable keyboard and touch pad
- ✓ Large hard disk

GENERAL-PURPOSE NOTEBOOK Intel Core 2 Duo T5500, 2GB RAM, 160GB disk, Nvidia GeForce Go 7600 graphics, DVD+/-RW +/-DL, 15.4in widescreen LCD, 2.9kg
PART CODE LX.AFQ0X.023
SUPPLIER www.laptopsdirect.co.uk
DETAILS www.acer.co.uk



ECLIPSE Matrix Pro 72i-VSTA

★★★★

£750 inc VAT

The Matrix Pro is well specified, but it has a poor keyboard and a disappointing battery.

FEATURES

Like Acer's Aspire, Eclipse's Matrix Pro 72i-VSTA has a spacious 160GB hard disk. It's the only notebook in this group with Bluetooth built in, so you can use a Bluetooth-equipped mobile phone as a modem. It's one of the first notebooks we've seen with an eSATA port for connecting external eSATA hard disks.

The touch pad is accurate, with responsive buttons. Although the keyboard is large and well spaced, the keys lack resistance and feel springy. This can make extended bouts of typing tiresome. The Matrix Pro has a noticeably loud and distracting internal cooling fan, making it unsuitable for use in quiet places such as libraries.

The widescreen glossy display is bright with even backlighting, but we spotted some coarseness in both our colour and greyscale tests. It's not ideal for photo manipulation.

PERFORMANCE

Thanks to a generous 2GB of RAM and a Core 2 Duo T7200 processor, the Matrix is one of the fastest notebooks in the group. It's almost as quick as Toshiba's Satellite Pro, which has a faster processor but only half as much RAM.

The Matrix is the only notebook here with an ATI Radeon graphics chip. Its Mobility Radeon X1600 produced nearly 18fps in our Call of Duty 2 test. It can play 3D games, but you'll need to lower the level of graphical detail for a smooth frame rate. The Matrix has a short battery life of just one hour and 53 minutes. It's not suited for working away from a power socket for long periods of time.

VERDICT

The Matrix Pro is fast in Windows and has a spacious hard disk. Its keyboard is poor, though, and its noisy cooling fan is annoying. With a short battery life as well, it looks poor when compared to others in this group.

SUMMARY

- ✓ Fast in Windows
- ✓ Large hard disk
- ✗ Disappointing battery life; loud fan

GENERAL-PURPOSE NOTEBOOK Intel Core 2 Duo T7200, 2GB RAM, 160GB disk, ATI Mobility Radeon X1600 graphics, DVD+/-RW +/-DL, 15.4in widescreen LCD, 3.0kg
PART CODE N/A
SUPPLIER Eclipse 08707 456000
DETAILS www.eclipsecomputers.com



EVESHAM Quest A430

★★★

£799 inc VAT

Evesham's Quest A430 has a large display, but many of its features are disappointing.

FEATURES

The Quest is the only notebook here with a 17in widescreen display. Its high resolution of 1,680x1,050 pixels makes it easy to work on multiple documents simultaneously. It displayed smooth gradients in our colour and greyscale tests, but pure white areas looked grey and colours appeared muted and gloomy. It's not a good choice if you want to edit photos.

Although it feels sturdy, the Quest is also heavy at nearly 3.5kg. It's also fairly dull to look at. It is expandable, though, as it includes slots for both ExpressCard/54 and CardBus expansion cards. The touch pad is annoyingly inaccurate with small buttons.

The keyboard has a numeric keypad that makes entering figures quick and easy. However, this means that commonly used keys, such as the return and cursor keys, are narrower than they are on other keyboards and harder to press. The keys also lack resistance, so touch-typing is more difficult.

PERFORMANCE

Unlike the other notebooks in this group, the Quest uses an AMD Turion 64 X2 TL-56 processor. It was the slowest notebook in all our performance benchmarks, and its score of 117 overall is the lowest here.

With a 256MB Nvidia GeForce Go 7600 graphics chip, the Quest did well in our Call of Duty 2 test. It can play modern 3D games, but you'll have to lower the graphical detail settings for even smoother frame rates. The Quest's battery lasted for less than two hours in our test, so it's not much use for travelling.

VERDICT

We were disappointed by the Quest A430's weight, battery life, touch pad, keyboard and display. It's also the slowest notebook here for Windows tasks. Unless you value a large screen above all else, it's not a good choice.

SUMMARY

- ✓ Large, high-res display; decent 3D performance
- ✗ Poor battery life and Windows performance
- ✗ Poor touch pad and keyboard

GENERAL-PURPOSE NOTEBOOK AMD Turion 64 X2 TL-56, 1GB RAM, 100GB disk, Nvidia GeForce Go 7600 graphics, DVD+/-RW +/-DL, 17in widescreen LCD, 3.4kg
PART CODE N/A
SUPPLIER Evesham 08701 609500
DETAILS www.evesham.com



ROCK Pegasus 665 T56



£853 inc VAT

Rock's Pegasus is quick in Windows and has a high-resolution display, but its battery and hard disk are poor and it's a little expensive.

FEATURES

The Pegasus has a 15.4in widescreen display, but its high resolution of 1,680x1,050 matches that of the 17in screen on Evesham's Quest. This makes it easy to work on two documents side by side, but reading small text can be uncomfortable for those with poor eyesight.

The display's poor image quality doesn't help. It's very dark, even at the highest brightness setting, with noticeable shifts in colour accuracy at different viewing angles. We also noticed considerable coarseness in our colour and grayscale transition tests.

The 80GB hard disk is the smallest in this group, and serious typists will find the spongy keyboard tiresome to use. Annoyingly, the placement of the delete and insert keys to the left of the cursor keys makes it too easy to overwrite your typing accidentally. The touch pad is small but accurate, with firm and responsive buttons.

PERFORMANCE

The Pegasus performed well in our benchmarks thanks to its 2GB of RAM and a Core 2 Duo T5600 processor, scoring 147 overall. It's not the fastest notebook in the group but it can handle all but the most strenuous tasks. It ran our Call of Duty 2 test at 18fps, and is capable of playing the latest 3D games. You'll have to lower the resolution or the graphical detail settings to get a smooth frame rate, though.

The Pegasus has the shortest battery life of any notebook in this group. It lasted for just one hour and 38 minutes in our test, making it unsuitable for regular mobile use.

VERDICT

The 665 T56 has a high-resolution screen, but its image quality is poor and its battery life is the worst here. It's also the most expensive notebook in the group. It's not good value.

SUMMARY

- ✓ High-resolution display
- ✗ Poor image quality; expensive
- ✗ Small hard disk; short battery life

GENERAL-PURPOSE NOTEBOOK Intel Core 2 Duo T5600, 2GB RAM, 80GB disk, Nvidia GeForce Go 7600 graphics, DVD+/-RW +/-DL, 15.4in widescreen LCD, 3.1kg
PART CODE N/A
SUPPLIER Rock 0845 688 0501
DETAILS www.rockdirect.com



SONY Vaio VGN-N29VN/B



£720 inc VAT

It's not particularly fast in Windows, but Sony's Vaio VGN-N29VN/B is cheap with a good keyboard and battery.

FEATURES

We're not fond of the Vaio's box-like appearance, but it does feel sturdy. It has only two USB2 ports, so if you use more than a few peripherals you'll need to buy a USB hub or keep unplugging the ones you're not using.

The keyboard is large and well spaced. The keys don't have as much depth of travel as those on the Satellite Pro, but it's comfortable to type on. The large touch pad buttons feel firm but the pad can be inaccurate.

Colours were reproduced vibrantly on the glossy widescreen display, but white areas had a grey tint. We spotted some dithering in our greyscale transition test, but overall its image quality was among the best in this group.

PERFORMANCE

While fast enough for everyday office tasks, the Vaio's T5200 processor is one of the slower chips in the Core 2 Duo range. It managed respectable scores in our video-encoding and multiple applications benchmarks, but its overall score of 125 is one of the lowest here.

Unfortunately, the Vaio isn't suited for gaming, as it's one of two notebooks in this group without a dedicated graphics chip. Its integrated Intel GMA 950 graphics processor couldn't run our Call of Duty 2 test, but it should be able to play older titles. We were more impressed by the Vaio's battery, which lasted for three hours and 15 minutes in our test. It's second only to the Acer Aspire, and good enough for many short-haul flights.

VERDICT

Regular users of demanding applications such as Photoshop or Premiere will want a faster, more powerful notebook. The Vaio is the cheapest notebook here, though, and with a comfortable keyboard, good-quality display and long battery life it's a good choice.

SUMMARY

- ✓ Good battery life
- ✓ Quality keyboard and display
- ✗ Disappointing Windows performance

GENERAL-PURPOSE NOTEBOOK Intel Core 2 Duo T5200, 1GB RAM, 120GB disk, Intel Graphics Media Accelerator 950 graphics, DVD+/-RW +/-DL, 15.4in widescreen LCD, 2.9kg
PART CODE VGN-N29VN/B.CEK
SUPPLIER www.laptopsdirect.co.uk
DETAILS www.sony.co.uk



TOSHIBA Satellite Pro A120-186



£778 inc VAT

Toshiba's Satellite Pro A120-186 is fast in Windows applications and has a rugged chassis that will survive a few knocks. Its touch pad is poor, though, and its display isn't great.

FEATURES

The grey frame feels well made. Its 120GB hard disk has shock protection, the keyboard is spill-proof and the motherboard is shaped to keep it away from the usually vulnerable chassis corners. It's the only notebook in this group with no FireWire port, though, and all its connectors are inconveniently located on the back, rather than on the sides, of the chassis.

The keyboard is a little cramped, but with plenty of travel it's comfortable to type on. Unfortunately, the touch pad feels inaccurate, while its spongy buttons lack feedback.

The Satellite's display has an anti-glare coating rather than a glossy finish, which reduces reflections from overhead lights. Unfortunately, images looked grainy and dark, and areas that should have been pure white were displayed with a slight blue cast.

PERFORMANCE

With a Core 2 Duo T7400 processor inside, the Satellite is one of the fastest notebooks in the group. It even outperformed Eclipse's Matrix Pro, which has a slightly slower processor but twice as much memory.

The Satellite has no dedicated graphics processor and uses an integrated Intel GMA 950 chip, so it's no good for gaming. The battery is more impressive, and it lasted for two hours and 27 minutes.

VERDICT

The Satellite is well built with good Windows performance and a responsive keyboard, but its display isn't particularly good and it's useless for gaming. It's a good choice if you want a very powerful notebook, but for most users Sony's and Acer's notebooks are better value.

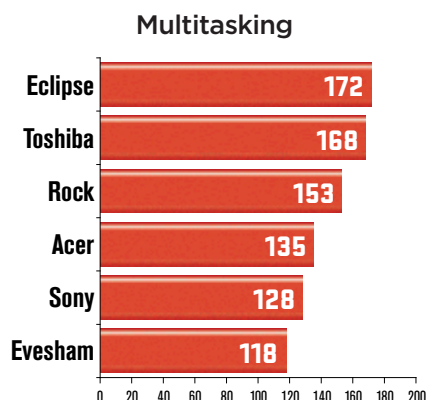
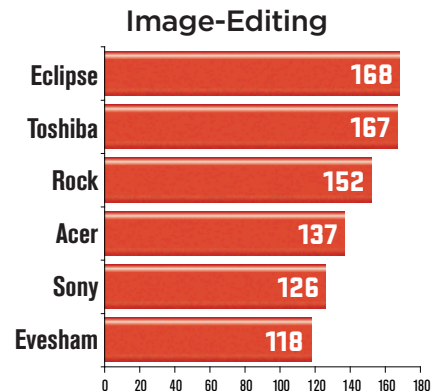
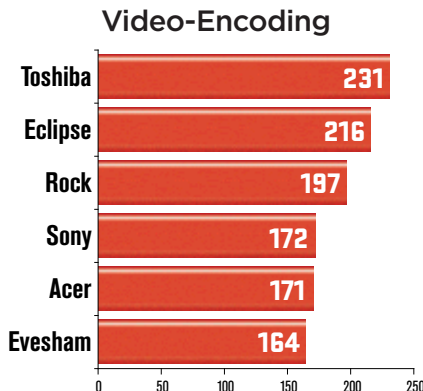
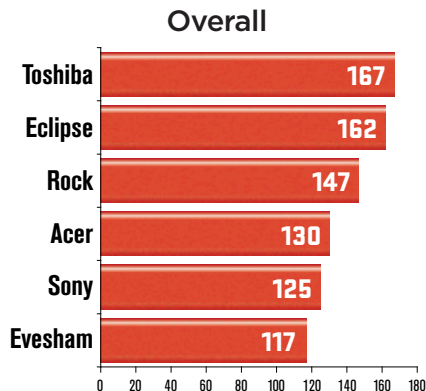
SUMMARY

- ✓ Very fast in Windows
- ✓ Good keyboard, decent battery
- ✗ Disappointing touch pad and display

GENERAL-PURPOSE NOTEBOOK Intel Core 2 Duo T7400, 1GB RAM, 120GB disk, Intel Graphics Media Accelerator 950 graphics, DVD+/-RW +/-DL, 15.4in widescreen LCD, 2.8kg
PART CODE PSAC1E-05R021EN
SUPPLIER www.laptopsdirect.co.uk
DETAILS <http://uk.computers.toshiba-europe.com>

BENCHMARKS

2D Performance Shopper application tests



Computer Shopper's 2D benchmarks are designed to show how PCs stand up to the toughest tasks Windows can throw at them. Today's PCs have no problem running office applications such as Word and Excel, so we have chosen to focus our tests on areas where you could experience difficulties.

There are four scripts. Encoding a video to MPEG2 format is an extremely processor-intensive task that anyone interested in transferring home videos to DVD will have to tackle. Our image-editing test simulates a session of photo enhancement using Paint Shop Pro X, culminating with the composition of a panorama from a set of snaps. In our third test, a set of audio files is ripped to MP3 format. Finally, the multitasking test tests

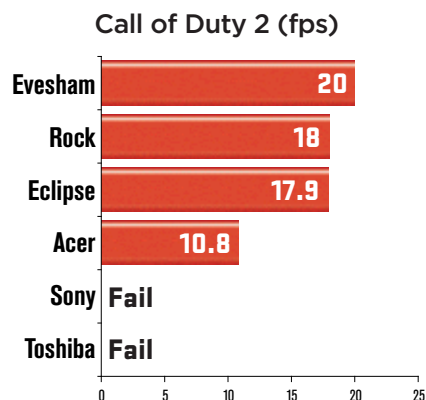


SETTINGS We run our application tests at the notebook's native resolution in 32-bit colour
WEB www.computershopper.co.uk

the real-life benefits of Hyper-Threaded and dual-core processors. This test compresses a DVD for playback on a Pocket PC at the same time as running our image-editing test.

Figures are relative to a reference Evesham Athlon 64 3500+, which scores 100 in all tests.

3D Performance Call of Duty 2

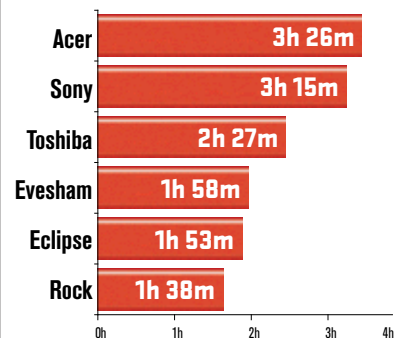


SETTINGS
 1,024x768
 resolution, high
 quality, 4x AA
WEB www.futuremark.com

Call of Duty 2 uses DirectX and is one of the most demanding games available. With a wide range of effects and frenetic action, it tests every aspect of graphics performance.

A good score here indicates that a PC should cope with any graphically intense 3D game coming on to the market today.

Battery life Run time



Our battery test involves light browser use with the display at its middle brightness setting.

Labs verdict £800 notebooks

We were surprised by the variety of notebooks submitted for this month's test. They show that the quality of £800 notebooks varies significantly, so it pays to choose carefully.

Evesham's Quest A430 and Rock's Pegasus 665 T56 both have high-resolution displays, but too many compromises have been made to accommodate them. The Quest underperforms in Windows applications, and the Pegasus' display is poor. Eclipse's Matrix Pro is fast, with a large hard disk and plenty of useful extras, but it has an annoyingly loud

cooling fan. All three suffer from poor batteries and springy keyboards.

If you want a powerful computer, Toshiba's Satellite Pro is a good choice. It's extremely quick in Windows tasks, but you'll have to put up with a poor touch pad and a disappointing display. Sony's Vaio isn't particularly powerful, but it is inexpensive with a good keyboard, a great battery and decent display. It's a good choice if you're on a tight budget.

The best notebook in this group, however, is Acer's Aspire 5683WLMi. It's fairly powerful,



and it also has a great battery, a spacious hard disk and a comfortable keyboard and touch pad. It gets the balance between power and features just right, and it wins our Best Buy award.



MANUFACTURER	ACER	ECLIPSE	EVESHAM	ROCK	SONY	TOSHIBA
Model	Aspire 5683WLMi	Matrix Pro 72i-VSTA	Quest A430	Pegasus 665 T56	Vaio VGN-N29VN/B	Satellite Pro A120-186
Rating	★★★★★	★★★	★★	★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
Processor	Intel Core 2 Duo T5500	Intel Core 2 Duo T7200	AMD Turion 64 X2 TL-56	Intel Core 2 Duo T5600	Intel Core 2 Duo T5200	Intel Core 2 Duo T7400
Speed	1.66GHz	2.0GHz	1.8GHz	1.83GHz	1.6GHz	2.16GHz
Memory installed	2GB	2GB	1GB	2GB	1GB	1GB
Memory slots (free)	2 (0)	2 (0)	2 (0)	2 (0)	2 (0)	2 (0)
Max memory	4GB	2GB	2GB	2GB	2GB	4GB
BIOS	Acer	AMI	AMI	Phoenix	Phoenix	Toshiba
Dimensions (HxWxD)	50x365x273mm	51x370x275mm	48x402x284mm	51x368x274mm	50x360x278mm	40x360x268mm
Weight	2.9kg	3.0kg	3.4kg	3.1kg	2.9kg	2.8kg
Sound	RealTek HD	RealTek HD	RealTek HD	Not disclosed	RealTek HD	RealTek HD
Pointing device	Touch pad	Touch pad	Touch pad	Touch pad	Touch pad	Touch pad
DISPLAY						
Screen size	15.4in widescreen LCD	15.4in widescreen LCD	17in widescreen LCD	15.4in widescreen LCD	15.4in widescreen LCD	15.4in widescreen LCD
Graphics adaptor	Nvidia GeForce Go 7600	ATI Mobility Radeon X1600	Nvidia GeForce Go 7600	Nvidia GeForce Go 7600	Intel Graphics Media Accelerator 950	Intel Graphics Media Accelerator 950
Graphics outputs	D-sub, DVI, S-video	D-sub, S-video	DVI, S-video	DVI, S-video	D-sub	D-sub
Graphics memory	128MB dedicated	256MB dedicated	256MB dedicated	256MB dedicated	224MB shared	224MB shared
Native resolution	1,280x800	1,280x800	1,680x1,050	1,680x1,050	1,280x800	1,280x800
STORAGE						
Hard disk (available)	160GB (142GB)	160GB (149GB)	100GB (87GB)	80GB (74GB)	120GB (102GB)	120GB (110GB)
Optical drive	DVD+/-RW +/-DL	DVD+/-RW DL	DVD+/-RW +/-DL	DVD+/-RW +/-DL	DVD+/-RW +/-DL	DVD+/-RW +/-DL
Optical drive speeds	Matshita UJ-850S (8X DVD+R, 8X DVD-R, 6X DVD+RW, 6X DVD-RW, 2.4X DVD+R DL, 24X CD-R, 10X CD-RW, 8X DVD-ROM, 24X CD-ROM)	Matshita UJ-850S (8X DVD+R, 8X DVD-R, 6X DVD+RW, 6X DVD-RW, 2.4X DVD+R DL, 24X CD-R, 10X CD-RW, 8X DVD-ROM, 24X CD-ROM)	TSST SN-S082D (8X DVD+R, 8X DVD-R, 8X DVD+RW, 6X DVD-RW, 6X DVD+R DL, 4X DVD-R DL, 5X DVD-RAM, 24X CD-R, 24X CD-RW, 8X DVD-ROM, 24X CD-ROM)	TSST SN-S082D (8X DVD+R, 8X DVD-R, 8X DVD+RW, 6X DVD-RW, 6X DVD+R DL, 4X DVD-R DL, 5X DVD-RAM, 24X CD-R, 24X CD-RW, 8X DVD-ROM, 24X CD-ROM)	Matshita UJ-850S (8X DVD+R, 8X DVD-R, 6X DVD+RW, 6X DVD-RW, 2.4X DVD+R DL, 24X CD-R, 10X CD-RW, 8X DVD-ROM, 24X CD-ROM)	Matshita UJ-842S (8X DVD+R, 8X DVD-R, 4X DVD+RW, 4X DVD-RW, 2.4X DVD+R DL, 5X DVD-RAM, 24X CD-R, 16X CD-RW, 8X DVD-ROM, 24X CD-ROM)
PORTS AND EXPANSION						
USB2 ports	4	5	4	3	2	3
FireWire	1	1	1	1	1	0
Infrared port	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Bluetooth	No	Yes	No	No	No	No
Networking	10/100/1,000, 802.11a/b/g	10/100/1,000, 802.11a/b/g	10/100/1,000, 802.11b/g	10/100/1,000, 802.11a/b/g	10/100, 802.11b/g	10/100/1,000, 802.11a/b/g
PC card slots	1x ExpressCard/34, 1x CardBus	1x ExpressCard/54	1x ExpressCard/54, 1x CardBus	1x ExpressCard/54	1x ExpressCard/34	1x CardBus
Modem	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Legacy ports	None	None	None	None	None	None
Memory card reader	Secure Digital, MultiMedia Card, Memory Stick Pro, xD	Secure Digital, MultiMedia Card, Memory Stick Pro	Secure Digital, MultiMedia Card, Memory Stick Pro, xD	Secure Digital	Secure Digital, Memory Stick	Secure Digital
Other ports	Optical S/PDIF	1x eSATA	None	Optical S/PDIF	None	None
MISCELLANEOUS						
Carrying case	No	No	No	Yes	No	No
Direct CD control	No	No	No	No	No	No
Operating system	Windows Vista Home Premium	Windows Vista Home Premium	Windows Vista Home Premium	Windows Vista Home Premium	Windows Vista Business	Windows Vista Business
Operating system restore option	Restore partition	Windows disc	Windows disc	Restore partition	Restore partition	Restore disc
Software included	CyberLink PowerDVD, CyberLink PowerProducer, Norton Antivirus 2005, NTI CD Maker	N/A	Bullguard Antivirus 7, Roxio Easy Media Creator Basic 9, Microsoft Works 8.5	Microsoft Works 8.5, Bullguard Internet Security 7, Roxio 9 Lite Edition	InterVideo WinDVD 8.0 for VAIO, Microsoft Works 8.5, Roxio Easy Media Creator 9, Sony Click to DVD 2.6, Sony DVgate Plus 2.3, Sony SonicStageCP 4.2	InterVideo WinDVD for Toshiba
Other standard accessories	Integrated 1.3 megapixel webcam	Integrated 2 megapixel webcam	Integrated 1.3 megapixel webcam	N/A	N/A	N/A
Optional extras (inc VAT)	N/A	N/A	N/A	Nine-cell battery £99	N/A	N/A
BUYING INFORMATION						
Company founded	1976	1993	1983	1992	1946	Notebook division 1985
Employees	6,000	30	418	Not disclosed	162,000	Not disclosed
Tech support staff	160	7	81	6	40	Not disclosed
Tech support times	9am-5pm Mon-Fri	9.30am-5.30pm Mon-Fri	9am-5.30pm Mon-Sat	9am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 10am-2pm Sat-Sun	8.30am-6pm Mon-Fri	8am-6pm Mon-Fri
Parts and labour warranty	One year RTB	One year RTB	One year onsite, two years RTB	Three years' collect and return	One year RTB	One year RTB
Price including VAT	£791 inc VAT	£750	£799	£853	£720	£778
Price excluding VAT	£673	£638	£680	£726	£613	£663
Details	www.acer.co.uk	www.eclipsecomputers.com	www.evesham.com	www.rockdirect.com	www.sony.co.uk	http://uk.computers.toshiba-europe.com
Supplier	www.laptopsdirect.co.uk	Eclipse 08707 456000	Evesham 08701 609500	Rock 08456 880501	www.laptopsdirect.co.uk	www.laptopsdirect.co.uk
Part number	LX.AFQ0X.023	N/A	N/A	N/A	VGNN29VN/B.CEK	PSAC1E-05R021EN